

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 28

NEWSWEEK
17 June 1985



A rash of spy cases: 'They're resorting to our greatest vulnerability—individual greed'

The View From the FBI

In the wake of the Walker spy scandal, FBI Director William Webster spoke with NEWSWEEK correspondent Elaine Shannon about the recent rash of espionage cases and counterintelligence efforts. Excerpts:

SHANNON: Why do these espionage cases seem to be mercenary, not ideological?

WEBSTER: One consistent pattern I have observed over the last seven years is that we are not encountering ideology, which suggests that the Marxist-Leninist political side is not really selling in this country . . . What we're seeing now in substantial doses is an effort to achieve military and economic superiority through other efforts, such as the acquisition of American high technology and military information . . . These kinds of intelligence activities necessarily involve on their part efforts to recruit American citizens . . . They're not doing it by ideological

conversion, they're doing it by resorting to what appears to be our greatest vulnerability—individual greed.

Q. What can the FBI do to prevent that?

A. We've been to 16,000 different companies with our Defense Counterintelligence Awareness program. We'll continue those programs, but the recent cases will probably do more to sensitize companies dealing with the government and having access to military secrets than our persistent calls. I think that what's going to happen now is that they'll listen . . . We show them how recruiting takes place, the subtleties of making contact. We ask them to be alert to the kinds of changes in conduct and stress factors on employees in key positions that might alert them to a change in their trustworthiness . . . We have an impressive array of techniques in the technological area that are

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

highly classified that help us become aware of hostile intelligence . . . The recruitments in place have gone up, and there we have the real payload income of counterintelligence.

Q. Will we see the results of recruitments in place anytime soon?

A. Don't look for a sudden avalanche. It's been working all through this period. If you've got somebody who's part of the act in the opposition who's telling you what's going on, it's a lot better than trying to flirt with them through dangles . . . The dangling process keeps them off balance—sending double agents against them because they're less certain about whom they're dealing with, whether they're dealing with a real traitor . . . More meets in Mexico and other places suggest that it's getting harder for them to do business in the United States.

Q. Then why wasn't Walker detected?

A. Our society doesn't contemplate looking over everyone's shoulder until there's some indication that someone is doing something. We shouldn't. That's the price we pay for a free society . . . Our function is not to watch people in their private lives. Our function is to focus on points of contact where . . . those who would betray their country would have to make contact.

Q. What is the FBI currently doing to keep up with the expanding Soviet presence in this country?

A. There is a planned growth in our counterintelligence capability that has had administration support . . . We've been steadily reducing the imbalance between the number of Soviet and Soviet-bloc agents in the country and the number of FBI special agents that we can deploy . . . You either have to increase the counterintelligence personnel and support or you have to control the growth of the hostile intelligence effort. We're talking beyond the Soviet Union, about Soviet-bloc countries that act as surrogates for the Soviet Union and certain Third World operations such as Cuba.